

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A seal assembly for a reciprocating ram shaft of a blowout preventer, comprising:

a blowout preventer body having a bore;

a shaft having a first end and a second end, the ram shaft being adapted to move reciprocally within the blowout preventer body between ~~[[an]]~~ a fully extended position extending from the blowout preventer body and a fully retracted position retracted within the blowout preventer body;

at least one first circumferential seal positioned in the blowout preventer body and circumscribing the first end of the ram shaft, the first circumferential seal performing a dedicated sealing function of preventing fluids from migrating along the ram shaft from a first region of the blowout preventer body, the ram shaft having a first seal travel area which is in continuous sealing contact with the first seal during axial reciprocating movement of the ram shaft between the fully extended position and the fully retracted position, at least a portion of the first seal travel area extending from the blowout preventer body where it is exposed to contaminants when the ram shaft is in the fully extended position;

at least one second circumferential seal positioned in the blowout preventer body and circumscribing the first end of the ram shaft in axially spaced relation to the first circumferential seal, the second circumferential seal being ~~dedicated to performing the same sealing function as the first circumferential seal and serving as a redundant back up seal until the first circumferential seal experiences seal failure~~ isolated on each side from fluids to be sealed against such that the second circumferential seal only serves an active sealing function upon failure of the first circumferential seal, the second circumferential seal being positioned to contain all fluids within the blowout preventer body and prevent fluids from migrating along the ram shaft from the first region of the blowout preventer body and to maintain the seal at the first end of the

ram shaft in the event of a failure of the first circumferential seal, the ram shaft having a second seal travel area which is in continuous contact with the second seal during axial reciprocating movement of the ram shaft between the fully extended position and the fully retracted position, the second seal area remaining sheltered within the blowout preventer body even when the ram shaft is in the fully extended position; and

the first seal travel area and the second seal travel area being axially spaced separate and distinct areas on the ram shaft, such that damage to the exposed portion of the first seal travel area leading to a failure of the at least one first circumferential seal does not lead to failure of the at least one second circumferential seal, as the second circumferential seal engages the second seal travel area which is separate and distinct from the first seal travel area.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously presented) The seal assembly of Claim 1, wherein the first and second seals each comprise a seal cluster including a primary seal, a seal ring carrier, a wiper seal and an o-ring seal.

4. (Canceled)